

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 12649

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, MX
SUBJECT: DRAFT LAW FOR GENERAL AMNESTY

REF: A) MEXICO 12311 B) MEXICO 12379

1. SUMMARY: IN A JULY 28 MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE PARTIDO SOCIALISTA DE LOS TRABAJADORES (PST), PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO REPORTEDLY OFFERED TO PRESENT TO CONGRESS THIS FALL AN AMNESTY LAW WHICH WOULD BENEFIT PRISONERS, AND PERSECUTED AND EXILED POLITICIANS. THE PST SOUGHT TO TEST THIS OFFER IN AN AUGUST 1ST PRESS CONFERENCE, WHERE THEY PRESENTED EX-GUERRILLAS THAT THEY HAVE ACCEPTED INTO THE PST. REACTIONS TO THE PROPOSED AMNESTY VARY FROM SUPPORT BY LEFTIST PARTIES, TO CONDEMNATION BY A CONSERVATIVE PAN DEPUTY. TO MAINTAIN BALANCE IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, THE PROPOSED AMNESTY MAY HAVE TO BE A COMPROMISE WHICH MAY VERY WELL FALL SHORT OF THE HOPES OF THE MEXICAN LEFT. END SUMMARY.

2. RAFAEL AGUILAR TALAMANTES, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PST SAID IN A JULY 29 PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD AGREED TO AN AMNESTY THAT WOULD BENEFIT PERSONS
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DETAINED FOR THEIR POLITICAL CONVICTIONS AS WELL AS THOSE THAT ARE PERSECUTED OR EXILED. ACCORDING TO AGUILAR, LOPEZ PORTILLO SAID HE WANTED TO PUT AN END TO THE ANGUISH OF MOTHERS LOOKING FOR THEIR CHILDREN, AND THAT HE WOULD ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE THEIR WHEREABOUTS. THE PST TESTED THIS BROADER APPLICATION OF POLITICAL REFORM BY ANNOUNCING AT A AUGUST 1ST PRESS

CONFERENCE THAT THE PST HAD ACCEPTED INTO ITS RANKS THIRTEEN EX-GUERRILLAS. AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE THE YOUTHS REFUSED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES AND WOULD ONLY SAY THAT THEY HAD LAID DOWN THEIR ARMS AND WERE FOLLOWING THE DISCIPLINE OF THE PST. THEY WERE PAROLED FROM JAIL IN GUERRERO WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT THEY WOULD BE BENEFICIARIES OF THE AMNESTY LAW. COMMENT: THE PST HAS UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO ALIGN ITSELF WITH THE PRI FOR THE 1979 ELECTIONS, WHICH SUGGESTS A WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE GOM ON AN AMNESTY LAW AS WELL.

3. POLITICAL REACTIONS TO THE PROPOSED AMNESTY AND INCORPORATION OF EX-"GUERRILLAS" INTO THE PST HAVE VARIED. THE PCM (MEXICAN COMMUNIST PARTY) AND THE PPS (PARTIDO POPULAR SOCIALISTA) WELCOME THE AMNESTY AS A SIGN OF THE POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT. COMMENTING ON THE PROPOSED GOVERNMENT AMNESTY, THE PCM SPOKESMAN DESCRIBED THEIR GOALS AS A GENERAL AMNESTY "FOR ALL WITHOUT EXCEPTION", THE DISSOLUTION OF SECURITY FORCES SUCH AS THE WHITE BRIGADE, AND THE END OF UNION AFFILIATION IN MASS TO POLITICAL PARTIES. PROMINENT PRI POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN SILENT ON THE AMNESTY, POSSIBLY PENDING CONFIRMATION OF HOW FAR THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO GO WITH THE PROPOSAL. GUILLERMO ISLAS OLGUIN, A PAN DEPUTY, SAID THAT THE ACCEPTANCE OF GUERRILLAS INTO POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD

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INSTITUTIONALIZE VIOLENCE AND FOR THAT REASON HE WAS AGAINST AN AMNESTY LAW.

4. COMMENT: THE PRESIDENT'S REPORTED OFFER OF AN AMNESTY LAW PROBABLY DERIVES IN PART FROM THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE TO DEFEND POLITICAL PRISONERS, WHICH ORGANIZED A JULY 26 MARCH SUPPORTING GENERAL AMNESTY. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT REPORTS OF WHAT WAS SAID DURING THE PST MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT HAVE COME ONLY FROM THE PST. NEITHER THE PRESIDENT NOR HIS SPOKESMAN HAVE PUBLICLY COMMENTED ON THE AMNESTY PROPOSAL WHICH LEAVES THE PRESIDENT CONSIDERABLE LATITUDE WITH THE PARTICULARS OF THE PLAN.

5. THE GRANTING OF AN AMNESTY WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE RELEASE OF SOME PEOPLE IN DETENTION, AND THE PUBLICATION OF THE NAMES OF THOSE KILLED IN CONFRONTATIONS WITH SECURITY FORCES.

6. IF THE PERSONS RELEASED FROM DETENTION DISAVOW FURTHER VIOLENCE AND PURSUE THEIR POLITICAL GOALS THROUGH PARTY ACTIVITY, THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE COULD BENEFIT

THROUGH THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A BROADER CONSENSUS FOR NORMS
OF LEGAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF FOR-
MER TERRORISTS RETURN TO VIOLENCE AS A POLITICAL TOOL US-
ING A LEGAL POLITICAL PARTY AS A FRONT, IT COULD ENGENDER
FURTHER VIOLENCE THAT WOULD SET BACK THE PURSUIT OF GREAT-
ER POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MEXICO. THE PRESIDENT HAS A
DIFFICULT TASK BEFORE HIM - TO CONVINCE CONSERVATIVE
GROUPS OF THE BENEFITS OF OPENING THE POLITICAL PROCESS
TO BROADER PARTICIPATION, WHILE CONVINCING LEFTIST
GROUPS TO ESCHEW VIOLENCE AS A POLITICAL TOOL, TO
PARTICIPATE ACCORDING TO THE RULES OF ELECTORAL
POLITICS, AND TO ACCEPT LIMITS ON THEIR FREEDOM TO
ATTEMPT TO ORGANIZE THE LABOR SECTOR. AGREEMENT FROM
THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT ON REVISED RULES FOR POLITICAL
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PARTICIPATION SHOULD HELP MAINTAIN THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL
STABILITY ACHIEVED OVER THE PAST 50 YEARS. LUCEY

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